

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 01409 131342Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /011 W
-----089433 131406Z /47 R
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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7182

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1409

STADIS////////////////////////////////

FOR NEA/ARN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EIND SY US
SUBJECT: ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VISIT TO US: SYRIAN
PARTICIPATION

REF: STATE 56238

1. I MET WITH IMADI MARCH 11 TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITY HIS
VISITING US AS HEAD OF SYRIAN DELEGATION APRIL 17-MAY 3.
IMADI CONFIRMED THAT HIS PARTICIPATION IN THESE MEETINGS HAS
BEEN APPROVED AT LEVEL OF PRIME MINISTER KHULAYFAWI. HE
PERSONALLY VERY MUCH HOPED TO MAKE THIS TRIP BUT CAUTIONED
THAT PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD NORMALLY DOES NOT GIVE FORMAL APPROVAL
OF SYRIAN DELEGATION MEMBERSHIPS UNTIL VERY LAST MOMENT. FOR
THIS REASON, HE HAD FELT OBLIGED DECLINE SPEAKING INVITATION
EXTENDED BY ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN NEW YORK FOR APRIL 19.

2. IF HE DOES MAKE THIS TRIP, IMADI WOULD WELCOME OPPORTUNITY
TO MEET WITH SAUNDERS AND AID OFFICIALS MENTIONED REFTTEL.

3. COMMENT: PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF SYRIAN UNWILLING-
NESS TO RECEIVE AHERTON, IT IS GOOD IDEA TO HAVE THIS CONTACT
IN COMING WEEKS BETWEEN IMADI AND SAUNDERS. IMADI REMAINS
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KEENLY INTERESTED IN DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN
AND DEVELOP US-SYRIA RELATIONS AND IS AT THE SAME
TIME DEPRESSED OVER WHAT HE CONSIDERS RENEWED
SUSPICION OF US MIDDLE EAST POLICY. HE IS NOT ACCUSTOMED
TO BEING THE BEARER OF POLITICAL MESSAGES FROM WASHINGTON
TO THE PRESIDENT AND QYADDAM, GENERALLY REFERRING TO
PLAY THE LOWER-KEYED ROLE OF ECONOMIC TECHNOCRAT. (THIS

SUBJECTS HIM TO QUITE ENOUGH PRESSURES FROM BAATHI IDEOLOGUES WHO OPPOSE HIS ADVOCACY OF GREATER LIBERALIZATION OF THE SYRIAN ECONOMY.) NONETHELESS, HE HAS ACCESS TO THE PRESIDENT AND I BELIEVE WE CAN RELY ON HIM TO TRANSMIT FAITHFULLY THE TYPE OF MESSAGE YOU OUTLINED PARA 1 REFTEL. I WILL MONITOR PROSPECTS OF HIS TRAVEL AND KEEP YOU ADVISED.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

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